

# **Employment and Management Considerations of Hungarian Special Operations Forces.**

**A Monograph  
by  
Major Szabolcs Pecsvarady  
Hungarian Defense Forces**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## **MONOGRAPH APPROVAL**

Major Szabolcs Pecsvarady

Title of Monograph: Employment and Management Considerations of Hungarian Special Operations Forces.

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan C. Fullerton, Ph.D.

Monograph Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert D. Haycock, COL, IN

Second Reader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas C. Graves, COL, IN

Director,  
School of Advanced  
Military Studies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

Director,  
Graduate Degree  
Programs

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## **Abstract**

EMPLOYMENT AND MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS OF HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES. by Major Szabolcs Pecsvarady, Hungarian Defense Forces.

Hungary has hardly begun the development process of her own special operations capability (SOC). In a way, the Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF) is in an advantageous position. There are role models, examples and proven methods available to adopt from the experiences of its coalitional partners. At the same time, however, there are not even comparable amounts of resources available, and frequently, economic considerations easily override professional ones in the life of the small and still vulnerable Hungarian Special Operations Forces (HUNSOF). The HDF may endanger the capabilities of HUNSOF by misusing it in combat and mismanaging it in peacetime, either because of necessity or by the mistakes of the planners or decision-makers. To avoid this, Hungarian planners should identify and consider several factors in relation to the employment and management of special operations forces, to negate the short- and the long-term effects of misuse or mismanagement. The monograph seeks to answer to two questions, which leads to the justification or denial of the thesis. First, how well does the doctrinal background support the effective use of HUNSOF in combat operations? Second, how well does the HDF acknowledge certain management requirements of HUNSOF as quality assurance measures? The first question is important, since deficiency in doctrines results in faulty planning, which leads to the possible destruction of SOF in combat. The second question is important because a military organization's (in this case, HUNSOF's) combat capabilities rest on its peacetime management.

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## Part 1. Introduction.

The raid on Osama Bin Laden's compound on May 2, 2011 placed the special operations forces in the focus of media attention. Several articles praised the capabilities of these forces and many more articles analyzed the training and requirements to be a member of these units. In a way, the raid itself, as the only visible part of the operation for the public, eclipsed the other features of special operations. In reality, even from this small segment of the operation, one may observe several key aspects of special operations (SO). James D. Kiras presents a complex definition of special operations in his book, *Special Operations and Strategy*. Kiras, who is an assistant professor at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies and Associate Senior Fellow of the Strategic Studies Division of the Joint Special Operations University at Hurlburt Field, Florida, states that special operations aimed to economically resolve politico-military problems at the operational or strategic level.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the killing of the head of the most significant terrorist organization was a strategic objective and due to the global political aims of Al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden posed a political and military problem at the same time. Another aspect of SO is the presence and acceptance of increased risk. It was visible that even despite the preparations, rehearsals and the use of advanced technologies, the crash of one of the helicopters was a tactical risk the planners accepted when they planned this phase of the operation as an air assault raid. However, this risk is insignificant compared to another, which is not so obvious to many untrained observers. And this risk comes from the willingness to conduct a military action in the territory of a third country without formal advance notification and agreement, risking a possible fight with the local security forces, and risking serious political tension with the country's government afterward (especially if the action is unsuccessful).

The third aspect of SO is, its inherently joint nature. While elements of the US Navy Special Operations Forces (NAVSO) carried out the raid, numerous other organizations and military units conducted the month long reconnaissance, surveillance, the planning and execution of the aerial insertion

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<sup>1</sup> James D Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

and the following site exploitation and analysis of the gathered intelligence. Indeed, this raid shows that conducting special operations is a high risk, high pay-off military endeavor, and that special operations forces (SOF) are a valuable asset. Further background information, however, reveals the other side of the world of special operations. In her book, *Unconventional Warfare*, Susan L. Marquis, a senior civilian official in the Department of Defense, characterizes SOF with the phrase “the precarious value”.<sup>2</sup> The book is about the evolution of United States Special Operations Forces from the early days of Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II. Reading the book, one may see the battles within the highest level of political and military decision-making groups in the United States regarding the special operations forces, and one may gain the impression that their own masters threatened SOF operators more often than any armed adversaries did.

Observing their obvious public and professional appreciation, one may conclude that the SOF community of the United States is over its crisis period, and actions like the above-mentioned raid further solidify the acceptance and belief in SOF. Some countries however, like Hungary, have hardly begun the development process of their own respective special operations capability (SOC).<sup>3</sup> In a way, the Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF) is in an advantageous position. There are role models, examples and proven methods available to adopt from the experiences of its coalitional partners. At the same time, however, there are not even comparable amounts of resources available, and frequently, economic considerations easily override professional ones in the life of the small and still vulnerable Hungarian Special Operations Forces (HUNSOF).

## **Purpose and Hypothesis.**

Perhaps it is obvious that light infantry, mechanized infantry, or even SOF have similar fundamental capabilities, regardless of the armies of which they are part. Thus, assuming the existence of sound doctrines, the circumstances of their likely employment are more or less similar. However, there

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<sup>2</sup> Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>3</sup> For the definition of SOC see: Glossary.

are other factors, which are specific to a given country. Disregarding these factors facilitates the misuse of SOF and significantly increases the risk of a SO or endangers mission accomplishment. Thus, the planners of the country have to be aware of them, and because of the currently emphasized coalitional aspect of war, these considerations should not avoid the attention of the coalitional partners as well. For these reasons, the purpose of this monograph is twofold. First, the monograph identifies factors and issues in the planned combat employment and the peacetime management of HUNSOF, which may endanger its existence, or decrease its capabilities. Definitely, the aim is not to show and critique current or past mistakes and look for scapegoats. Nor is it an objective of the monograph to highlight the importance of necessary organizational changes, or transformation. It will simply introduce certain features of HUNSOF, which may represent planning factors or at least considerations during unilateral or coalitional employment.

Thus, as a second or indirect purpose, the monograph will serve as a guide for international planners. There are many differences, smaller or more significant in almost every aspect of military operations among the nations. Despite standardization efforts, there are frictions between planners, units, and even within a combined staff. Thus, it is perhaps useful to show those considerations in the life of a small country's army, which are not so obvious to those from a more robust army.

The HDF may endanger the capabilities of HUNSOF by misusing it in combat and mismanaging it in peacetime, either because of necessity or by the mistakes of the planners or decision-makers. To avoid this, Hungarian planners should identify and consider several factors in relation to the employment and management of special operations forces, to negate the short- and the long-term effects of misuse or mismanagement. The monograph seeks to answer to two questions, which leads to the justification or denial of the thesis. First, how well does the doctrinal background support the effective use of HUNSOF in combat operations? Second, how well does the HDF acknowledge certain management requirements of HUNSOF as quality assurance measures? The first question is important, since deficiency in doctrines results in faulty planning, which leads to the possible destruction of SOF in combat. The second question



is important because a military organization's (in this case, HUNSOFF's) combat capabilities rest on its peacetime management.

## Literature Review.

The existence of this monograph and its intended purpose already signal an existing issue in the HDF. This problem is the relatively limited professional Hungarian literature in this topic. There are two primary reasons why the relevant Hungarian literature is small. First, regarding widely available commercial books, the market is small. The number of professional readers hardly exceeds a few thousand (the HDF itself is only 20,000 strong), which limits the will of publishers to issue books for such a limited audience. Second, since the capability is relatively new, there are no unclassified experiences available as reference.<sup>4</sup> Surely, there is available information about the activities in public media, but their value as a source of useful information for a military scholar is minimal. One may observe the selectiveness of these sources if one opens the website of the official military media, for example.<sup>5</sup> One may track the life of the Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan, but there is very limited information on the activities of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT), and definitely nothing about the special forces (SF) team.<sup>6</sup> This is quite understandable, and even necessary.

The real problem emerges when one wishes to study the official lessons learned publications, or a compilation of case studies, because currently there is no such thing. This means that apart from the small

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<sup>4</sup> The first, and so far, only civilian book about the combat activities of the HDF in Afghanistan was published only in 2011. Nevertheless, the HDF did not permit the author to write about the deployed SF teams. Szlankó Bálint, *Maximum nulla áldozattal* [Zero Casualties, Maximum] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 2011). Interview with the author is available at [http://hvg.hu/vilag/20110618\\_szlanko\\_balint\\_afganisztan?FullComment=true#comments](http://hvg.hu/vilag/20110618_szlanko_balint_afganisztan?FullComment=true#comments) (accessed August 12, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> The official website of the Hungarian military media is accessible at [www.honvedelem.hu](http://www.honvedelem.hu)

<sup>6</sup> OMLTs provide training and mentoring to the host nation military forces. They also serve as a liaison between the host nation and coalitional forces, coordinating the planning of operations and ensuring that the host nation units receive necessary support. Detailed information about the OMLTs in Afghanistan is available on the following NATO website: <http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/factsheets/omlt-factsheet.pdf> (accessed July 20, 2011). PRTs in Afghanistan are military-civilian organizations responsible for the rebuilding and development of a given region in cooperation with the host nation authorities. A brief overview about the activities of the PRTs is available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oef-prt.htm> (accessed July 20, 2011).

cadre who is authorized to monitor official records, no one is able to analyze and use recent experiences. Thus, in searching for supporting Hungarian literature, one may find the most credible source of information in this topic in the PhD dissertation library of the Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University in Budapest.

A detailed analysis of the comprehensive special operations capability of the HDF is available in the dissertation of LTC Imre Porkoláb.<sup>7</sup> His dissertation focuses on the SOF employment in relation to the asymmetric warfare, terrorism and guerilla warfare. He provides a detailed overview of units with special operations capabilities, but he mostly focuses on the employment of 34th Bercsényi László Special Forces Battalion (BLSFB). LTC Porkoláb mentions the importance of the strategic level employment of SOF, and that the economical use of the available resources is crucial during the development and employment of SOF.<sup>8</sup> Based on the research, he found that Hungary is not ready to answer the challenges of the new, asymmetric threats, like the emergence of international terrorist organizations. The HDF does not have the comprehensive doctrine system related to these new threats, and the focus of training does not address the increased amount of combat actions between the military and various guerilla forces, which are common in the current deployments. He warns that during the development of SOF, HDF has to grant structural and doctrinal flexibility to shape successfully the necessary capabilities.<sup>9</sup>

For successful employment of SOF, there is a need for clear tasks and missions, effective command and control, and a suitably organized unit. LTC Porkoláb's key observation is that in 2008 it was not clear whether Hungary possessed those key requirements or not.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, regarding the command and control, LTC Porkoláb warns that any higher-level military command has to acknowledge

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<sup>7</sup> LTC Imre Porkoláb, "A különleges műveleti erők helye, szerepe és feladatai az aszimmetrikus kihívásokból adódó katonai feladatok tükrében, különös tekintettel a nemzetközi terrorizmus elleni küzdelemre" [The Role of Special Forces in the Military Aspects of Asymmetric Conflicts, with Special Emphasis on Combating International Terrorism] (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest 2008). In Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem Egyetemi Központi Könyvtár Doktori adatbázis, [http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2009/porkolab\\_imre.pdf](http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2009/porkolab_imre.pdf) (accessed August 21, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Porkoláb, „A különleges műveleti erők helye, szerepe és feladatai”, 40.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 71.

the distinctiveness of SOF. Parallel to this, only properly trained, educated and adept personnel has to work on the development of SO capabilities, and it is necessary to establish a strategic level command for HUNSOF.<sup>11</sup>

LTC László Forray, another officer with special operations background presents almost the same observations in his dissertation, entitled *Possible Improvement of the Training, Preparation and Equipment of the Special Operations Battalion*.<sup>12</sup> He identifies the need for adequate organization and command and control, next to a clear task and purpose statement of the relevant HUNSOF units. He identified the need for adequate monetary, logistical and legal support as well and made remarks about the hindering effects of inadequate legal support in the case of the employment of the 34th battalion.<sup>13</sup> Despite that he focuses on the training and structure of the 34th BLSFB, he gives an even better introduction of HUNSOF units, with more detailed description of their respective tasks and purposes. Additionally, he introduces the existing plans for the short-, mid- and long-term development of special operations capability of the HDF, and explains the required readiness levels of the 34th BLSFB.

These two documents definitely serve as primer to HUNSOF and special operations in general. In addition, due to their comprehensiveness, they somewhat compensate for the lack of HUNSOF related professional literature. Still, it is worthwhile to introduce two additional dissertations as secondary sources. Neither of them is about HUNSOF, but both address generic issues within the HDF that affect the HUNSOF units.

The first one is the dissertation of István Görög, *Provision of Human Resources for the Infantry in the Period of Modernization of the Army, with Special Focus on the Commissioned Troops*.<sup>14</sup> In this

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>12</sup> LTC László Forray "A Különleges Műveleti Zászlóalj kiképzésének, felkészítésének és felszerelésének fejlesztési Lehetőségei" [The Development Possibilities for Training, Preparation and Equipping the Special Operations Battalion] (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2009). In Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem Egyetemi Központi Könyvtár Doktori adatbázis, [http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/forray\\_laszlo.pdf](http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/forray_laszlo.pdf) (accessed August 21, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> The monograph introduces the 34th BLSFB later in this chapter. Ibid., 13.

<sup>14</sup> István Görög, "A szárazföldi csapatok humánerőforrás biztosítása és fejlesztése a hadsereg modernizációs időszakában, különös tekintettel a szerződéses légénységi állományra" [Provision of Human Resources for the Infantry in the Period of Modernization of the Army, with Special Focus on the Commissioned Troops]. (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2009). In Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem Egyetemi

dissertation, Görög introduces and analyzes certain aspects of the human resource management of the HDF between 1995 and 2008. He examines the changes in strength of the HDF in relation to the major reorganizations during this period and the effects of the drastic decrease of the size of HDF. He concludes that the HDF did not align its human resource strategy to the various social trends and tendencies of the society. Thus, the HDF did not accomplish the majority of the set human strategy objectives. The HDF had problems with the alignment of the organizational and personal interests, it was not able to effectively recruit and retain adequate amount of manpower. The reason for this was that the overall transformation process of the HDF was less than effective, and on many occasion the HDF disregarded or misinterpreted important social changes or phenomena in the country. This is relevant for the analysis of HUNSOF because Görög collects statistical data about the strength of the HDF, links them to specific events, and provides explanations for the changes and trends. Since these are army-wide, overarching trends, they certainly influence human resource management in case of HUNSOF as well, because the administrative distinction of HUNSOF from the conventional majority of the HDF is marginal.

Another, secondary source is the dissertation of LTC László Szilágyi (Ret.), *The Changes in Workplace Satisfaction of the Professional Personnel of the Hungarian National Defense Forces Between 1996-2007*.<sup>15</sup> The purpose of his research is the analysis of the job satisfaction of the professional military between 1996 and 2007, because this indicates that how do the professional cadre evaluate the recent transformation of the HDF. LTC Szilágyi conducted an empirical analysis through a survey and focused on certain aspects of military service, such as the satisfaction with service related facilities and equipment, motivational and compensation system, and satisfaction with the social (family) support system of the HDF. He transforms the numerical data of the survey to graphs, and identifies

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Központi Könyvtár Doktori adatbázis, [http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/gorog\\_istvan.pdf](http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/gorog_istvan.pdf) (accessed July 25, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> LTC László Szilágyi (Ret.), "A professzionizálódó Magyar Honvédség hivatásos állománya munkahelyi elégedettségének alakulása 1996-2007 között" [The Changes in Workplace Satisfaction of the Professional Personnel of the Hungarian National Defense Forces Between 1996-2007]. (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2009). In Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem Egyetemi Központi Könyvtár Doktori adatbázis, [http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/szilagy\\_i\\_laszlo.pdf](http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/szilagy_i_laszlo.pdf) (accessed August 24, 2011).

trends. Among others, LTC Szilágyi concludes, that despite the various modernization attempts, the status of the infrastructure and the quality of the equipment is obsolete according to the survey results. The survey revealed that the majority of the professional officers and NCOs consider the advancement system ineffective and the compensation system unsatisfactory. Similarly, the questioned personnel consider the social support system of the HDF inadequate. Due to the minimal difference between the rights and privileges of the conventional military and HUNSOF, all these findings show effects which influence the life of HUNSOF personnel, thus provides a quite exact representation of the personal concerns of HUNSOF members, which in turn have an influence on the human resource management possibilities of HUNSOF.

Unlike the Hungarian literature, the available American literature about special operations forces is voluminous and comprehensive. One book is particularly relevant to the topic of this monograph. The already introduced book of Susan L. Marquis focuses mostly on the management of the United States SOF, from the aspect of a senior civilian official, who does not have the professional prejudices of a soldier.

In her book, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Susan L. Marquis presents the history of the rebuilding process of the special operations forces in America.<sup>16</sup> The significance of this book in light of the topic of this monograph is that it shows the lessons SOF learned from its major operations on the field, and the process through which these lessons were transformed to organizational, doctrinal and policy changes on higher level political and military decision-making.

Marquis starts with an overview of American special operations units in World War II and in Vietnam. She introduces the distinct organizational culture of SOF, and briefly introduces the selection and training process of the respective services' special operations forces. The truly important part of the book from the aspect of this monograph starts with the events of the failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt

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<sup>16</sup> Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

in 1980, Operation Eagle Claw.<sup>17</sup> This event triggered a major transformation of the SOF, since the Holloway Commission, which was responsible for the investigation, identified the inadequate command and control structure, lack of joint training and proper equipment and other several issues that led to the tragic events.

The book introduces those persons, organizations, and committees, whose opinion influenced the reformation process of SOF. Nevertheless, the process was not smooth and, additional issues came to the surface, as the United States employed its SOF. Although Operation Urgent Fury (1983, the invasion of Grenada) was a success, serious mistakes made it bitter to SOF. As the author summarizes, this operation showed that the military executed poorly the SOF revitalization attempts of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. The effectiveness of the special operations forces was low, planning was poor and uncoordinated and SOF took serious losses; only two operations were successful out of the seven in which SOF participated on the day of the assault. Marquis gives a detailed introduction of the operation and highlights those problems, which still existed despite the reforms of SOF.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the lessons learned from this operation fueled additional reforms. At this point, as Marquis writes, the advocates of SOF realized that employing unconventional bureaucratic tactics in support of the transformation of SOF was futile. Thus, there is a need of a stronger external force, thus, the involvement of the highest level of decision-making was necessary. The reform attempt reached the Congress, which was deeply involved in specific questions about the policy, allocation of resources and organization of SOF, and its primary manifestation, the so-called “Nunn-Cohen amendment” to the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act passed through the political decision making channels in November 1986.<sup>19</sup>

The following operations in the book are Operation Just Cause (1989, Panama), and Desert Storm and Desert Shield (1991, Iraq). Marquis concludes that after Desert Storm the nexus between the conventional military and special operation forces changed, the distrust and friction disappeared, and that

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 145.

currently, SOF is strong and capable.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Marquis warns that the different organizational culture of the special operations forces has an inherent risk, which their internal adversaries may use to their advantage during generalization attempts of SOF. The book clearly highlights that deep organizational changes require support from outside the military. As the book's title suggests, sometimes establishing, organizing and keeping alive the special operations forces was similar to unconventional warfare, it required the unconventional methods of few a dedicated men. A particularly critical foreign reader may consider the history of SOF reform marginally useful lesson due to obvious differences in the military or political decision-making and organizations. Still, the introduced case studies themselves are useful, since they show the possible tragic outcome of the employment of incomprehensive and mismanaged special operations forces.

Another valuable source of information about special operations is the book of William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice*.<sup>21</sup> Vice Admiral McRaven is a Navy SEAL (Sea, Air and Land Team) and commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in 2008. In this book, he analyzes special operations through introducing case studies, ranging from World War II operations to the 1976 Israeli hostage rescue operation in Entebbe. He focuses on the analysis of the fight during special operations, more exactly how one achieves advantage over a numerically stronger enemy. For this, McRaven introduces the concept of relative superiority, and shows the key aspects of the plans and the most important actions of the soldiers, which provided them the advantage despite their numerical inferiority. He introduces operations of various nations.<sup>22</sup> This gives the possibility to find the universal, army-independent aspects of special operations, and it enables the reader to focus more on the aspects of the given operation. McRaven analyzes the specific cases according to his

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>21</sup> William H McRaven, *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1995).

<sup>22</sup> He analyzes eight case studies, certain special operations of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Israel and Italy.

special operations model.<sup>23</sup> Following this, he asks three questions in case of every mission. Was the objective worth the risk? Was the plan adequate to minimize the risk and ensure success? What modifications could have improved the result? His analysis in searching for the answers is valuable to any current military planner who plans special operations. It helps to identify those points and aspects of special operations, which are crucial to the success of a mission. Indeed, some of these aspects are in the current SO doctrines. Nevertheless, the case study methodology helps to put them into context, and see the direct outcome of their acknowledgement or disregard. Since Hungary does not have extensive special operations history, the book is especially valuable for planners of the HDF to understand key aspects of special operations.

## **Limitations and Scope.**

Although the above-mentioned pieces of literature support a wide area of possible research, there is a need of certain limitations this monograph has to acknowledge. Most importantly, despite the title of the monograph, in the Hungarian military terminology there is no such thing as HUNSOF. The monograph uses the term, as the grouping of special operations capable units of the HDF. Within this group, the monograph focuses on two units mostly, the 34th Bercsényi László Special Forces Battalion (BLSFB) and the 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion (LMB). The reason is that these two units, as SF and special support infantry, represent two key elements of a comprehensive special operations capability. Parallel to this, these two units' organization and mission are similar to their respective United States Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) counterparts (the SF battalions and a Ranger battalion), which facilitates their comparison as part of the methodology of the monograph. The monograph will limit its focus on the employment of HUNSOF to its current state, and by necessity, it will use the currently available, and yet sometimes several years old sources.

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<sup>23</sup> The key elements of his model are surprise, speed, purpose, security, repetition, simplicity. McRaven, *Spec Ops*, 11.



Despite the fact that the monograph focuses on the application of HUNSOF, it does not limit its broader applicability. The Hungarian Defense Force is quite small, compared to the majority of its coalitional peers, which means that diversity within the army is lesser than in a greater military organization, especially with more than two armed services.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the currently available economic resources impose the same limitations evenly throughout the HDF. It is not possible to promote excessively one service or even a unit over the others, which in turn means that the employment and management of HUNSOF units have the same or very similar considerations to the other, conventional HDF units.

## **Methodology.**

One may divide the analysis of the current use of HUNSOF to two distinct areas. First, there is the employment in combat. To examine the intended combat employment, and answer the first research question, the monograph examines the key official manuals and doctrines. Since HUNSOF's organization mirrors the United States Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), for this a brief overview of relevant chapters of Field Manual (FM) 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces*, discussing employment considerations, gives a good foundation for a short analysis.<sup>25</sup> The monograph examines whether the same or similar considerations appear in the relevant Hungarian documents. Parallel to this, it will analyze whether their application provides a relatively unambiguous guideline for the possible employment of HUNSOF. Sound doctrines may prevent the inappropriate employment of HUNSOF; they help avoiding significant combat losses and ensure that HUNSOF may fight the best way it fits for its capabilities. However, the way SOF fights is a result of its raising, training and treating in peacetime.

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<sup>24</sup> The strength of the HDF was 25,440 in the end of 2008. This is 86% of the maximum authorized strength, and the number of the civilian employees is included. Hungarian Ministry of Defense *Tájékoztató az országgyűlési képviselők részére a honvédelmi politika 2008. évi megvalósításáról, a Magyar Honvédség felkészítéséről, állapotáról és fejlesztéséről szóló beszámolórol* [Briefing for the Members of the National Assembly About the Training, Status and Development of the Hungarian Defense Forces in 2008]. (Budapest: Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, 2008), 8. [http://www.regiment.hu/files/9/11771/hm\\_2008\\_evi\\_tajekoztato.pdf](http://www.regiment.hu/files/9/11771/hm_2008_evi_tajekoztato.pdf) (accessed August 15, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, FM 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army. September 2006), 1-10.

Thus, seeking the answer to the second research question, the second area of the analysis is the establishment, development and everyday management of the units. This analysis is somewhat less exact than the comparison of relevant manuals. The life of HUNSOF as a group of units is complex enough to make a short analysis anything but deep or comprehensive. To frame the analysis, the monograph uses the *SOF truths* as a guide.<sup>26</sup> ARSOF community uses the SOF truths to articulate the key philosophy behind the peacetime management and combat employment of ARSOF, and may serve as a good tool to focus the analysis of the management of HUNSOF to certain areas. The first step is to identify the meaning of these statements, and translate them into requirements. Following this, the monograph compares these requirements to the current capabilities and possibilities of the HDF. This makes it possible to find out if Hungary is able to acknowledge the SOF truths. If the answer is yes, then HUNSOF is probably on the correct path, and will have similar capabilities as the role model ARSOF has. However, disregarding one or more of these SOF truths may result in less-than-optimal HUNSOF performance in the future, or may generate a deficiency in the required characteristics of HUNSOF.

The rest of the first chapter of the monograph introduces HUNSOF, and the key pieces of available Hungarian literature. The second chapter analyzes and compares the most important SOF-related doctrines of ARSOF and HUNSOF, and shows planning considerations with regard the combat employment of HUNSOF. The third chapter analyzes the SOF truths and the HDF's ability and will to acknowledge them. Finally, the fourth chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

To justify the validity of the methodology, a short introduction of the special operations forces of Hungary is necessary to demonstrate the links between the ARSOF and HUNSOF, which makes their comparison logical.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Humans are more important than equipment; quality over quantity; SOF cannot be mass-produced; competent SOF cannot be established after emergencies occur. United States Special Operations Command, *USSOCOM History 6th Edition* (United States Special Operations Command, 2008), 29.

<sup>27</sup> A detailed introduction of HUNSOF is available in MAJ Szabolcs Pecsvarady "Special Operations Forces of Hungary: Is a Transformation Necessary?" (master's thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2010).

## Introduction of HUNSOFF.

Officially, there is no such grouping of units as special operations forces in Hungary and there is a doctrinal misunderstanding about SOF and SF. This directly leads to the recognition that there is no permanent operational level special operations chain of command; every special operations capable (SOC) unit of the HDF is either under the direct command of the Joint Force Command (JFC) or an infantry brigade. On the other hand, Hungarian special operation forces are quite well defined: special operation forces are those units whose at least one basic task is to conduct special operations, or to support special operations directly.<sup>28</sup> According to this definition Hungarian special operations forces consist of special forces (34th BLSFB), special support infantry forces (25/88th LMB), special operations capable forces (5/24th Bornemissza Gergely Reconnaissance Battalion, HDF Civilian-Military Operations Center) special operation helicopter forces (86th Szolnok Cargo Helicopter Base) and cooperating forces (e.g. members of various agencies).<sup>29</sup>

The unit that officially represents “the SOF” of Hungary is the 34th Bercsényi László Special Forces Battalion. Its immediate predecessor was the 34th Bercsényi László Reconnaissance Battalion, from which the Minister of Defense directed the founding of the 34th BLSFB in 2005. The unit is an independent battalion with the legal status of a regiment. Its official Hungarian name and title is the 34th Bercsényi László Special Operations Battalion, but in reality, the unit’s organization mirrors an ARSOF SF battalion.<sup>30</sup> The unit is under the direct command of the HDF Joint Force Command and its immediate service-related superior is the G-3 Operations branch of the JFC. The mission statement of the unit is to plan, support and conduct special operations to accomplish national or coalition objectives, within the full

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<sup>28</sup> Forray, “A Különleges Műveleti Zászlóalj kiképzésének, felkészítésének és felszerelésének fejlesztési lehetőségei”, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>30</sup> LTC Forray in his PhD thesis abstract highlights this misinterpretation, and suggests that 34th battalion should change name to “34th Special Forces Battalion”. (On the qualification tab of the 34th battalion the text correctly shows “Különleges Erők,” which means Special Forces.) LTC László Forray “A Különleges Műveleti Zászlóalj kiképzésének, felkészítésének és felszerelésének fejlesztési lehetőségei” [The Development Possibilities for Training, Preparation and Equipping the Special Operations Battalion] (PhD diss. abstract, Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2009), 7. In Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem Egyetemi Központi Könyvtár Doktori adatbázis, [http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/forray\\_laszlo\\_thu.pdf](http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/forray_laszlo_thu.pdf) (accessed August 21, 2011).

spectrum of conflict, by using unconventional methods and means, and participation in the military operations of counter-terrorist warfare.

The battalion consists of two special operation companies supported by combat service support and sustainment subunits.<sup>31</sup> The fundamental building blocks are the small special operation teams (SOT). Each maneuver company consists of a company staff and eight SOTs. Two of the teams are airborne capable and trained to conduct high altitude-high open (HAHO) jumps. Four of the teams specialize in vehicle insertions and two teams focus on waterborne operations.<sup>32</sup> The structure of the SOTs are similar to the ARSOF Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (SFOD-A), the smallest tactical element of a SF battalion. A twelve men SOT team consist of a commander (captain), deputy commander (warrant officer), operations NCO (warrant officer), intelligence NCO (SGT first class), 2 signal (NCO, SPC), 2 medic (NCO, SPC), 2 weapons (NCO, SPC), 2 engineer (NCO, SPC). Thus, the organization of the 34th BLSFB is similar to that of an ARSOF SF battalion.

The 25/88th LMB has a similar role to that of the 75th Ranger Regiment, which is the special support infantry of ARSOF. The battalion is a unit level military organization, with an independent table of organization and equipment, and part of the (combat) units of the HDF JFC, under the direct command of the 25th infantry brigade.<sup>33</sup> The first predecessor of the battalion was the 88th Air Mobile Battalion in 1993. Every major structural change of the HDF affected the battalion's organization as well. Likewise, in 1996, the battalion became the 88th Rapid Reaction Battalion. Four years later, the unit evolved into a regiment and continued its existence as the 1st Light Mixed Regiment. Again, four years later, in 2004, the next transformation downgraded the unit, it became the 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion, subordinated to the 25th infantry brigade.

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<sup>31</sup> The most authentic source of information is the introduction briefing made by the battalion's chief of operations, MAJ Gábor Sánta. MAJ Gábor Sánta, "A 34. Bercsényi László Különleges Műveleti Zászlóalj" [Introduction Briefing of the 34th BLSFB]. (PowerPoint presentation. Szolnok, 2010). Retrieved from the archives of the 34th BLSFB.

<sup>32</sup> Additionally, they are trained scuba divers and airborne qualified.

<sup>33</sup> The 25th Klapka György Infantry Brigade consists of a mechanized infantry battalion, a combat support battalion and the 25/88th LMB. Ministry of Defense, *A Magyar Honvédség évkönyve 2009* [Yearbook of the Hungarian Defense Forces, 2009] (Budapest: Zrínyi Communication Ltd., 2010), 72.

The battalion is to be ready to conduct military actions occurring in any climate and geographical region of the world. The unit is primarily light infantry, but its organization and equipment allows the employment as an air assault battalion and it has dedicated airborne company as well. The battalion is able to act as a rapid reaction force and conduct missions together with the air force or other units. It has to conduct special operations that conventional forces cannot accomplish, and participate in combat search and rescue missions.<sup>34</sup> The battalion provides a company-level combat support element “for the development of the special operations capability of the Hungarian Defense Forces.”<sup>35</sup>

Apart from these, in 2005, the battalion had to develop two additional capabilities. First, one company has to be able to act as a “force protection” company in crisis management operations. For this, the 2nd company of the battalion received BTR-80 armored personnel carriers, but the main profile of the company is still air assault. The 3rd company was tasked to develop “limited military police” capabilities, primarily for employment during crisis management operations.<sup>36</sup> For this, the company conducts extended training of riot control and police tasks, but it does not have the authority to investigate or conduct arrests or detention. The doctrine of the battalion states, that the battalion possesses parts of the capabilities of an airborne, air assault and Ranger type unit, and provided with the necessary air assets, has the highest strategic mobility within the HDF.<sup>37</sup>

Compared to a conventional infantry battalion, the unit has special branches in the staff and subunits. Staff elements and key positions are airborne qualified. The combat support subunits are the headquarters company and the combat support company. The combat support company consists of a long-range reconnaissance platoon, an engineer platoon, an anti-tank and a mortar platoon. The battalion has three combat subunits. The basic - and traditional - air assault role is common to all, which means that each company conducts air assault related training, and each company has the same equipment.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> The unit has no investigative authority.

<sup>37</sup> Hungarian Defense Forces, *A Könnyű Vegyes Zászlóalj doktrínája* [Doctrine of the Light Mixed Battalion] (Szolnok, 2005).

Additionally, the first company is a dedicated airborne company. Each company has three platoons of three squads, and a support weapon platoon with a mortar and an anti-tank squad.

Due to the limitations of the monograph mentioned earlier in this chapter, the introduction of the aviation units or the 5/24th BGRB as a special operations capable unit of the HDF is not applicable here. Still, the similarities of the above-introduced units and their respective ARSOF counterparts facilitate the further comparison throughout the monograph.

## **Part 2. Employment Considerations Based on Documents.**

Since there are similarities in the organization of ARSOF and HUNSOF - at least in the lowest levels - it is logical to highlight the already identified considerations regarding the employment of ARSOF. The American literature is quite large, and truly comprehensive; yet, the most authentic documents are the official manuals. FM 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces*, for example, excessively discusses the special operations operational mission criteria.<sup>38</sup> According the manual, there are five questions or five basic criteria a planner has to ask during the planning of a special operation. First, it is a question whether the planned mission is appropriate. As the manual states, ARSOF is not a substitute for other forces. If the mission does not require ARSOF skills and capabilities, then the mission is not for ARSOF. The second criterion is if the mission supports the campaign plan. If not, then ARSOF should conduct other, more important missions. Another question is whether the mission is operationally feasible. Since ARSOF is not tailored for a force-on-force, attrition-focused mission, tasks like these will likely be beyond their capabilities and pose a risk due to the vulnerability of ARSOF units to larger, more heavily armed or mobile forces, particularly in hostile territory. The next criterion is the availability of resources necessary for the mission. Occasionally, ARSOF needs extensive support. If these supporting resources are unavailable, ARSOF may not achieve its objective. Finally, the last question the planners have to ask is whether the expected outcome of the mission justifies the associated risk. One must not

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<sup>38</sup> FM 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces*, 1-10.

forget that ARSOF is expensive and has only limited resources. A high-risk mission only marginally contributing to the overall campaign unnecessarily endangers ARSOF assets. Parallel to this, commanders have to consider not only the potential loss of ARSOF units and equipment, but also the risk of adverse effects on diplomatic and political interests if the mission fails.

As the first step in planning a special operation, these questions are helpful, and may serve as a frame for further planning. The manual further highlights key aspects of SO planning, however. To facilitate a better understanding, it sets a list of the key characteristics of ARSOF, to ensure that the selected mission is compatible with its capabilities.<sup>39</sup> Following this, the manual finally lists the ARSOF imperatives.<sup>40</sup> These are somewhat more vague than the above-mentioned criteria and characteristics; nevertheless, they represent a useful tool to enhance proper planning. The manual warns that although the imperatives may not apply to all types of ARSOF, commanders must include the applicable imperatives in their planning and execution process. Among these imperatives, there are observations regarding the importance of the understanding of the operational environment, considering political implications, planning for long-term effects and the need of developing multiple options.

FM 3-05 provides a clear and comprehensive set of considerations that ARSOF planners have to observe and acknowledge. At this point, one may state, that there is no need to analyze this topic further, since the checklist is already available and planners just have to follow point-to-point. However, one must not forget that the manual is for ARSOF. Regardless of the similarities of ARSOF and HUNSOF, it is unlikely, that the USA and Hungary has to employ their respective SOF assets during similar circumstances. Different strategic aims, national political factors and available resources will facilitate or inhibit the employment of SOF according to this list. Based on this statement, the monograph analyzes whether these or similar ideas and considerations appear in the relevant Hungarian manuals, and how well does the doctrinal background support the effective use of HUNSOF in combat operations. Since

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 1-12.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 1-13.

HUNSOF units are all under the command of the Joint Force Command (JFC) of the HDF, the first and most obvious document to analyze should be the *Joint Doctrine* of the HDF.

### **The Joint Doctrine and Special Operations Related Documents.**

A doctrine is the accepted concept of war of a military institution. It is a fact that Hungary does not have such a level of experience of actual combat, as does the United States. This means that the doctrines contain adopted ideas, sometimes unproven methods based on assumptions, or both. Indeed, as the president of the Society of Military History and Professor of History at Texas University, Brian Linn states in his book *The Echo of Battle*, it is the group of peacetime intellectuals who shape the army way of war, rather than wartime service.<sup>41</sup> This may serve as a warning for the reader not to make harsh judgment about a product, which, in the case of HUNSOF, really has not had the possibility so far to prove itself in real life. Nevertheless, this does not inhibit the objective comparison of the documents of the HDF to the above-mentioned field manuals.

The HDF published the current version of the *Joint Doctrine* in 2007, two years after the decision and the initiation of the establishment of the 34th BLSFB and the special operations capability of the HDF. The doctrine itself is in line with the relevant NATO tenets, as it should be, and as the authors stated this in the foreword.<sup>42</sup> As it states, the HDF will employ its military force either alone, or within a coalitional framework. It highlights, that in the latter, the coalitional guidelines are prominent, but in the same time, it states that during the development of additional capabilities and any modernization, the resources of Hungary are crucial.<sup>43</sup>

There are two important findings in the doctrine regarding the possible employment of HUNSOF. First, the doctrine introduces the land forces and states that - among other units- there are two infantry brigades, and a special operations battalion. Thus, there is no mention of the 25/88th LMB or the 5/24th

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<sup>41</sup> Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 234.

<sup>42</sup> Hungarian Defense Forces, *Ált/27. Magyar Honvédség összhaderőnemi doktrína* [Hungarian Defense Forces Joint Doctrine](Budapest: Hungarian Defense Forces, 2007), 8.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 10.



Bornemissza Gergely Reconnaissance Battalion (BGRB) as SOC subunits. Second, in the introduction of the fundamental military operations - offense, defense, delay, deployment - it states, that special operations do not form a separate one, since they can be part of any crisis-reaction or wartime operations.<sup>44</sup> Apart from these two occasions, the mention of terms SO or SOF in the doctrine is incidental and uninformative. Not surprisingly, there is not a single document dealing with SOF among the several quite specific Allied Joint Publications (AJPs) and Military Committee Documents (MC) in the list of references.<sup>45</sup> These findings may not seem important, but further deductions may reveal some issues. First, with this division of ground forces, the reader of the doctrine gains the impression that the mentioned “special operations battalion” represents the full SO capability of the HDF. This is wrong, since the support infantry unit is the 25/88th battalion, while the 5/24th battalion has certain special operations capabilities as well. Second, despite the fact that the immediate command level above the SOF/SOC units is the JFC, there is not a single hint about their possible employment. Therefore, the Joint Forces Doctrine is not a great help for SO planning purposes. Thus, a planner of the JFC who, quite rightfully, uses this doctrine as a fundamental guidance for planning will be severely biased or uninformed about the use of HUNSOF. There are other, more specific documents, however, as references.

One such document is the *Employment Considerations of Special Operations Forces*.<sup>46</sup> This document is quite comprehensive, and contains important details about the special operations in general. The draft version of the document does not identify itself as doctrine, but one of the „supporting joint doctrinal” guidelines in the doctrinal hierarchy of the HDF. Additionally, its purpose is to serve as a doctrinal foundation for the effective use of special operations-related resources and enhance interservice coordination during special operations.<sup>47</sup> It similarly defines special operations, and introduces the features and characteristics of special operations and special operations forces based on ARSOF manuals.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 191-192.

<sup>46</sup> Hungarian Defense Forces. Joint Forces Command, J3- Operations, *A Különleges műveleti erők alkalmazási irányelvei* [Employment Considerations of Special Operations Forces] (2008). Electronic, draft version retrieved from the archives of the operations section of the 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 3.

It states, that the missions of special operations forces have to be appropriate, feasible, sustainable and worth the risks. The employment of HUNSOF may occur either unilaterally, using small elements or subunits, or in a joint multinational environment. The document introduces the national responsibilities which must be met during the employment of HUNSOF within the coalition.<sup>48</sup> Among these, the document mentions the necessary development of SO-related manuals, the need of participation in combined training, and the establishment of special operations command elements to ensure interoperability with the other NATO countries.

The document introduces the possible tasks of HUNSOF, and identifies special reconnaissance, direct action and military assistance as the three key tasks. Apart from these, it also lists several other additional and optional tasks. It explains the above mentioned tasks in detail, and discusses aspects of command and control of special operations and their support requirements. It lists the necessary capabilities of HUNSOF, which are required so that Hungary can be a special operations forces troop contributing nation within NATO.<sup>49</sup> Among the required capabilities, it explains, that HUNSOF may operate as a special operations tasks group (SOTG), a special operations task unit (SOTU) which is basically a 10-12 man element, the equivalent of a SFOD-A (special forces operational detachment-A), or the air force assets may form a special operations aviation task unit (SOATU). More important is the SOTG, which is a company level group. It consists of a command element, subordinate SOTUs, combat support and sustainment element. In case of deployment, it is a national level SOF organization under the command of the Combined Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command within NATO. The staff consists of J1-J6 sections, which means they should be a joint staff, but the doctrine does not define the possible source of the staff or the support element.<sup>50</sup>

Despite its comprehensiveness, the document contains the widespread ambiguity which exists in relation to the organization and structure of HUNSOF. It also states that the 34th battalion is the dedicated unit of the HDF for conducting special operations. Based on mission specific requirements however, other

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 11.

units or parts of other units may be designated as special operations forces, and others may support the 34th battalion.<sup>51</sup> Immediately after this paragraph, it defines the special operations forces, and among them identifies the 34th BLSFB as the special forces unit, the 25/88th battalion as the special support infantry unit, identifies the special operations capable units, and mentions the special operations aviation units. Based on these statements, one may identify two possible ways HUNSOF may conduct special operations. First, only the 34th battalion will conduct SO alone, since it is the "dedicated" unit for special operations, regardless of the fact that it is identified as special forces, which is only a segment of SOF. Second, based on specific mission requirements, an ad hoc grouping of SOF units will conduct special operations. As a valid and executable option, however, this kind of ad hoc organizations may fail miserably in special operations. The fiasco at Desert One is a good example of the catastrophic failure of an ad hoc special operations task group. A similar example is the already-mentioned performance of American SOF in Grenada, when due to the lack of coordination and unity of command, multiple SOF units planned action against the same target, without being aware of this fact.<sup>52</sup> The doctrine's description of the SOTG highlights another potentially harmful ambiguity regarding the employment of HUNSOF within NATO. As the officially dedicated SOF unit of the HDF is the 34th battalion, it can not form a SOTG alone since it has neither the necessary joint level staff element nor the combat support element in its organization. Thus, should Hungary be required to field a SOTG during a NATO deployment, it will have to include non-SOF units. That generates several issues, ranging from different legal privileges, caveats, difference in personal skills, equipment to differing unit level tactical procedures. At the minimum, it requires time consuming preliminary training, which is not necessary available in case of a crisis for example.

Another manual, the *Tenets of Employment of the Special Operations Battalion*, focuses solely on the 34th battalion, and provides similarly detailed information about the possible employment

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>52</sup> David Tucker, Christopher J. Lamb *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.), 97. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 95.

considerations.<sup>53</sup> It covers a wide range of specific areas of special operations, almost to the level of a tactical field manual. Among others, it discusses, for example, the battalion's command elements and organization of its headquarters, possible methods of regular, on call, and emergency sustainment, or the role of liaisons. The doctrine and the manual together cover all the important aspects of the employment of the 34th battalion unilaterally or within a coalition, but one may gain the strong impression that they do not discuss adequately the possible employment of the comprehensive special operations capability of the HDF.

### **Manuals of the 25/88th Battalion.**

While the tasks of the 34th battalion are clear and straightforward, in a way, there is an identity crisis within the HDF regarding the 25/88th battalion. The fundamental problem for a planner who tries to plan the employment of the battalion that which doctrine to use? There is the above-mentioned contradiction in the SO doctrine, about the definition of SOF and its units. In this way, it is hard to decide to what extent the tasks and considerations, mentioned in the SO doctrine, are applicable in case of the 25/88th battalion. Additionally, a comprehensive, yet short introduction of the possible employment methods of the 25/88th battalion is in the *Doctrine of the Light Mixed Battalion*.<sup>54</sup> This specific doctrine of the 25/88th battalion focuses on the aspects of major combat operations and certain points of peace support operations. Despite the fact that the specific considerations of the employment of the battalion appears in every chapter, the majority of the doctrine provides quite generic information, applicable for most infantry units. The only truly battalion-specific chapters are those two that discuss the airborne and air assault operations. The doctrine as a document is quite comprehensive, but it clearly discusses the employment of the battalion in conventional conflict, operating usually as part of a larger unit. Another,

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<sup>53</sup> Hungarian Defense Forces, 237/138. *A Különleges Műveleti Zászlóalj Alkalmazási Elvei* [Tenets of Employment of the Special Operations Battalion] (Joint Forces Command, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> Hungarian Defense Forces, *A Magyar Honvédség 25/88 Könnyű Vegyes Zászlóalj doktrínája* (Doctrine of the HDF 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion), (Szolnok, 2005).

indirect proof of this is the reference list, which contains several United States Army field manuals, but none of them is about special operations.

Planners may refer to another document, the *Combat Field Manual of the Light Mixed Battalion*, which summarizes the anticipated employment of the battalion quite well. It states, that the mission of the Light Mixed Battalion is to destroy the enemy and occupy its installations. The battalion is especially suitable to conduct operations in build up areas, mountainous areas, areas covered with dense vegetation; to conduct anti-armor ambush, conduct specific tasks of special operations and support the full spectrum of tasks of special operations. According to the manual, the 25/88th LMB operates primarily in a large area of operation, often in the depth of the enemy, and conducts decentralized attacks, reconnaissance and special operations, usually with company level and below, often during time of limited visibility. It accomplishes its mission through coordinated fires and the maneuvers of small tactical units, rather than the use of massed force.<sup>55</sup>

As is evident, special operations appear in this document, but the in-depth introduction of the battalion's activities in special operations is similarly indirect. The various chapters discuss the conventional aspects of warfare. The manual similarly describes the forms of maneuver or discusses the forms of offense or defense, for example, as the relevant American manuals do. It briefly introduces infiltration and the raid, which are typical elements of a special operation. Next to these, it describes the aspect of sustainment and command and control, and gives detailed instruction regarding the tasks of the relevant subunits and staff sections of the battalion. In this way, the doctrine is comprehensive and useful. Using this document, together with the *Air Assault Manual* of the 25/88th battalion, one may cover doctrinally the whole range of the battalion's possible tasks including the special operations support roles. However, the level of the mentioned documents represents their most important deficiency.

Both manuals focus on battalion-level execution in general war. Neither of them addresses the possible employment of a company with a command element for example as part of a SOTG, nor do the

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<sup>55</sup> Hungarian Defense Forces, *A Magyar Honvédség 25/88 Könnyű Vegyes Zászlóalj harczszabályzata* (Combat Field Manual of the HDF 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion), (Szolnok, 2005), 8.

documents address aspects of possible employment within NATO, or the aspects of cooperation with other SF units. The reason why these documents do not contain or emphasize more the aspects of special operations is that they predate the decision to develop a clearly articulated special operations capability within the HDF. Thus, at some point during the planning process, planners have to decide which doctrine to use, further enhancing the sense of the identity crisis. Moreover, the unclear designation of HUNSOF, and that the HDF considers the 25/88th battalion as a jack-of-all-trade unit, increases the risk of its misuse regardless of the used documents.

## **Summary.**

Observing the doctrinal background of a possible employment of HUNSOF, one may identify several factors, which will determine the nature of the employment itself. First, on the JFC level, special operations seems to be marginal, at least based on the extent the current *Joint Forces Doctrine* discusses the topic. The definition of HUNSOF is ambiguous, and so are the roles of the units. Because of this, despite its comprehensiveness, the applicability of the *Employment Considerations of Special Operations Forces* is questionable, since it does not dispel the misunderstanding about the meaning of SO, SOF and SF. Second, the 34th battalion has a quite well written and applicable document, the *Employment Considerations of the Special Operations Battalion*, which provides a clear and concise guide for the employment of the battalion. The documents of the 25/88th battalion are similarly detailed, but they do not contain the aspects of the newly-developed special operations capability of the HDF. Therefore, the use of the battalion may depend on which document will emerge earlier or has more weight as reference during the planning of an operation. Finally, it is noteworthy that these specific documents were developed at the respective units (the 34th and the 25/88th battalions), and unlike in the United States Army, their availability is severely limited even within the HDF. Thus, a higher-level planner may not necessarily be familiar with them, or have the possibility to read them thoroughly.

These are not the only risks, however. SOF, the “precarious value” according to Susan L. Marquis, is susceptible to mismanagement in peacetime as well. The next chapter will observe that how to be a good master of SOF, and what are the potential signs of its mismanagement.

### **Part 3. Management Considerations Based on SOF Truths**

If the misuse of SOF in combat may rapidly destroy it, the prolonged mismanagement in peacetime will certainly strain it, if in a less spectacular way. Parallel to this, the aspects of peacetime management has a direct effect in combat as well, since every action of the soldiers rest upon their fundamental capabilities, mostly gained by training and continuous practice before or between deployments. While the current deployments may not justify the existence of HUNSO, they do not make its correct management in peacetime unimportant. After all, as Carl von Clausewitz, a Prussian military theorist stated, the sole purpose of a soldier is to fight in the right place at the right time.<sup>56</sup> Everything he does until that moment has to support this purpose. Since special operations forces in the United States exist more or less continuously since World War II, ARSO was able to shape and improve the management of the special operations forces based on their combat experience. The most distilled manifestations of their observations are evident in the SOF truths, even if their meaning is not clear at the first glance. Nevertheless, forged in real deployments, the experiences of the ARSO serve as valid starting points for the further analysis of HUNSO.

General Wayne A. Downing, third commander of Special Operations Command, introduced the SOF truths in the mid-1980s, as a way to codify the need for quality in relation to SOF.<sup>57</sup> As General

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<sup>56</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 95.

<sup>57</sup> United States Special Operations Command, *USSOCOM History 6th Edition* (United States Special Operations Command, 2008), 29.

Downing summarized, humans are more important than hardware, quality is better than quantity, SOF cannot be mass-produced, and SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur.<sup>58</sup>

Observing the SOF truths, one may conclude that they have similar meaning. There is no reference or any official description or interpretation of them, however, either in the Joint Publication 3-05 *Special Operations* or in the Field Manual 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces*. Still, the monograph has to link a distinct aspect of the peacetime management of HUNSOF to each of these truths, beyond their slogan-like general meaning to be useful for the analysis.

Observing an organization through the lens of the SOF truths is not new idea. In 2009, MAJ Chester M. Dooly analyzed certain units of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) using the aspects of SOF truths during his research at the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base.<sup>59</sup> First, he proved that the SOF truths are applicable in case of the aircrew of the special operations squadrons. He then analyzes the effectiveness of training of two such squadrons, and for this, he uses the SOF truths as a mental guideline. As MAJ Dooly states, the SOF truths may offer insight into what the training process is and is not doing well in relation to special operations aviation.<sup>60</sup>

To use the SOF truths as a mental guideline to establish a structure for the analysis, the first step is to put them in a possible logical order, and limit their application to areas other than combat employment of SOF. Setting a timeline in the life of a SOF soldier (or unit), one may start with the selection of suitable candidates. Just as not everyone is suitable to pilot an aircraft, or effectively lead a division in combat, the complex life of a SOF operator requires certain pre-existing personal traits. Thus, the first aspect of the analysis is selection. For this, the truth, “SOF cannot be mass produced” is a logical partner. Not everyone is suitable to be a SOF operator, thus, one cannot mass-produce SOF due to the

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<sup>58</sup> There is newer, additional truth came to the list for example in the *USSOCOM Fact Book*, namely that SOF needs non-SOF support, but the monograph will focus on the original four. United States Special Operations Command, *USSOCOM Fact Book* (United States Special Operations Command Public Affairs, 2010), 44.

<sup>59</sup> MAJ Chester M. Dooly, USAF “Application And Implications For The SOF Truths And Aviation” (research report, Air Command And Staff College Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama 2009). <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA539511> (accessed July 17, 2011).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.



limiting effects of a rigorous selection. After selection, a candidate has to go through a similarly rigorous training, to enhance and develop the necessary skills. SOF personnel have to meet high professional standards, and training will further decrease the number of candidates, filtering out those, whose qualities are below the required levels. Parallel to this, the quality and the scope of training has to ensure that SOF is ready to operate in a wide range of possible situations. Thus, the next SOF truth is the necessary acceptance of “quality over quantity” approach.

By the end of the training, the army spent significant amount of resources and capital for the selection and training, thus has a combat-ready operator. Quite obviously, after the initial investment, the army wants to retain this soldier to the maximum extent possible. Thus, in a way, “men are more important than equipment” may be the third SOF truth, since no soldier has an indefinite shelf life like a piece of equipment. Without a proper career path, skills will diminish, motivation will fade away, and the investment lost. As SOF is a force that reacts quickly to emergencies, the fourth truth, “SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur” means, that if a country does not have a comprehensive SOF at the moment of the emergence of a crisis, then it is probably already too late. Thus, the structure and preparation of SOF has to mirror the expected emergencies.

Thus, summarizing the logic, one can say that SOF cannot be mass-produced, because it consists of carefully selected personnel, so HUNSOF has to have an effective selection system. Quality has to have priority over quantity because only a rigorous and comprehensive training may ensure that SOF operators are able to accomplish successfully their mission. This means, that the training of HUNSOF has to be distinct and effective on the level of the respective units, and comprehensive and coordinated on the higher level throughout the HUNSOF community. Men are more important than equipment, because SOF is expensive, and skills are perishable. Thus, there is a need of a valid career path in HUNSOF to keep them in the army and provide them a predictable career. Finally, competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur, thus the organization of HUNSOF and the activities of the respective HUNSOF units have to ensure, that they are deployable and combat ready in short notice. After this interpretation of the SOF truths, there is a possibility to observe these points in detail.

## **SOF Cannot be Mass Produced - Selection.**

In his book, James D. Kiras highlights that attrition plays a huge role in the training and selection process of SOF operators. Rigorous training tests the applicability of the candidates and limits the overall number of available SOF operators.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, when media attention is not focusing on the actual actions themselves, perhaps the second most favorite topic is the hardships a candidate has to go through to become a SOF operator. The effective training has to provide all the skills and knowledge a SO soldier has to have, but SOF training is expensive, and training personnel who are unsuitable or immature for the complex tasks of SOF is wasting resources. The logic behind the need of maturity is clear: SOF often has to operate in ambiguous environments with limited or nonexistent outside support where situations may emerge, which training did not cover. The need of maturity is clearly observable in various sources. An ARSOF SF operator in Afghanistan recalls his former experience that the Air Force SOF soldiers they had to work with are usually immature, too young, and for this, SF operators considered them as kids and a kind of liability.<sup>62</sup> SOF requires a slightly different mindset as well, which is probably hard to develop in adults by training; someone either has it or they do not.

In her book, Susan L. Marquis writes that in the United States Army during the 1970s, recruits could be assigned to SF training and assessment immediately upon joining the Army. This resulted in a loss of maturity in SF and the downgrading of requirements for entering and completing the qualification course. Second lieutenants led SF teams, which consisted mostly of privates first class and corporals. The reason was the manning problem, as an SF colonel explained.<sup>63</sup> Currently, ARSOF has a well-founded selection program, but due to the different purpose of the ARSOF units, the selection process and entry criteria of the various organizations are necessarily different. Special Forces requires the most mature personnel; thus, their emphasis is on the selection of candidates with former experience. The junior officer in an SF team is a captain. Enlisted personnel are usually sergeants, and typically, they have seven

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<sup>61</sup> Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy*, 60.

<sup>62</sup> Tucker and Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces*, 11.

<sup>63</sup> Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 40.

years in the army when they apply for SOF. Maturity has somewhat less importance in the case of the 75th Ranger Regiment, since their focus is more on combat. Nevertheless, the junior officers are usually first lieutenants who already have experience at the platoon level.<sup>64</sup> Parallel to this, the mandatory Ranger School is a quite effective selection and training process.

In a way, HUNSOF has realized and acknowledged the importance of selection. LTC Porkoláb writes that selection has to ensure that HUNSOF trains only those personnel who are suitable, since training is expensive. For this, selection is not only the first step in the SOF career, but also the most important. He introduces two possible methods of SOF selection and training. One is when during the training, the requirements rise incrementally, and the number of candidates decreases slowly, but continuously. The other is when the dropout rate is high during the early selection phase of the training and only the few most capable candidates continue the training.<sup>65</sup> For a small army with a limited budget like the HDF, this second method is the more economical.

In case of the 34th battalion, the selection process is two weeks in the case of applicants, who are already members of the HDF. The process has four phases, including physical fitness, land navigation, tactics and road marching. During these two weeks, the emphasis is on measuring the applicants' intelligence, endurance, and his social and emotional attributes. The attrition rate is high; during the selection of January 2011, for example, only five out of the original forty met the requirements.<sup>66</sup> The applicants who passed the selection may then continue the training in the Special Operations Basic Course.

In case of the selection of the enlisted personnel, who are fresh recruits in the HDF, the situation is different. Currently, recruits may join to the battalion literally from the street, without any former military education or experience. The battalion assigns a specific position to them first, and after that, they start their 14-week basic military training. Completing the training, they then transfer to the

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<sup>64</sup> Tucker and Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces*, 47.

<sup>65</sup> Porkoláb, „A különleges műveleti erők helye, szerepe és feladatai”, 112.

<sup>66</sup> Szabó Béla, „Különleges kiválasztás” [Special Selection] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/24026/kulonleges-kivalasztas> (accessed July 16, 2011).

battalion.<sup>67</sup> Thus, this procedure do not facilitate the desirable and economic method of picking the best candidates after a competitive basic training, since the candidates will start their selection only after the three-month long basic training, and they already occupy a position in the battalion's hierarchy, although they are not yet SF qualified.

The 25/88th battalion has neither any official selection process nor a mandatory capability or professional qualification requirement for the applicants to join the unit. In case of the enlisted personnel, the process is the same as that of the 34th battalion; they become member of the unit before the basic training. In case of the officers and NCOs, accepting an applicant occurs without any competitive or objective measurement process.<sup>68</sup>

There are several factors in the HDF, however, which greatly influence the application of any possible selection process. In the case of active soldiers who have maturity and former military experience, part of the problem are the existing social conditions, which influence their decision to join HUNSOF. As the HDF yearbook states, the internal mobility of the officers and NCOs within the army is small.<sup>69</sup> The reason is the limited family support system of the HDF, which means that changing duty position geographically usually results in a financial burden for a military family. Secondly, especially in the case of capable officers and NCOs, the army has a manpower shortage and commanders are not willing to release their most capable soldiers from their respective organizations. Thus, regardless of the will or the capabilities of the individual, in certain cases he may not be able to apply and serve in HUNSOF because it simply is not worth the financial costs. Conversely, most officers and NCOs who

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<sup>67</sup> Zilahy Tamás, "Ha fölveszik az egyenruhát, mindenki egyforma lesz..." [Everyone Looks the Same in Uniform...] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/26345/ha-folveszik-az-egyenruhát-mindenki-egyforma-lesz...> - (accessed August 06, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> The battalion is responsible for the "Rohamlövész" special infantry course, which is a demanding small unit leader and tactics course, mirroring the methods and curriculum of the US Army Ranger School. The 88th recommended to the JFC making this (and other) professional courses mandatory for the battalion's junior leaders, which similarly to the Ranger School, would serve as a selection and training for the small unit leaders of the 88th battalion. The JFC rejected the proposal however, which means that officially no one has to graduate from the course to be a squad or platoon commander in the battalion. HDF 25/88th LMB, *Report of the Commander of the 25/88th LMB to the DCOM JFC on issues and recommendations regarding the training system*. No. 208/66/2007. Retrieved from the archives of the 25/88th LMB.

<sup>69</sup> *Yearbook of the Hungarian Defense Forces*, 53.

apply for SOF are therefore the young, immature and inexperienced fresh graduates of military schools, for whom family considerations are not a factor.

Next to this limiting availability of recruits comes the unnecessarily strict medical screening system. According to the current order, which regulates the medical screening, every soldier has to pass a medical examination on a yearly basis for various reasons.<sup>70</sup> However, for airborne qualified soldiers (and most of the SOF positions require this qualification) the medical examination is far more strict than for others in the army.<sup>71</sup> This seriously limits the range of applicants, and acceptance into these positions is partly by chance (of medical fitness) than military skills and experience.

One may conclude that the HDF acknowledged the importance of selection, but only partly implemented it. The 34th battalion has a selection system, and is able to select the more adequate candidates; yet the 25/88th battalion does not have selection, which means that the unit has to commit significant resources to on the job training, to reach and maintain certain level of professional skills. Additionally, existing social support issues and flaws in the HDF's recruitment decrease the range of potential applicants.

### **Quality over Quantity - Training.**

One may analyze training separately on the tactical and the operational level. The tactical level training ensures that the respective units and their representatives have the necessary skills on the field to conduct special operations. This kind of training is mostly the task of the individual SOF battalions, and most of the time they can (although not necessarily should) conduct it by themselves, without excessive external support or coordination. On the operational level however, the training should be joint, and

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<sup>70</sup> Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, "7/2006. (III. 21.) HM rendelet a hivatásos és szerződéses katonai szolgálatra, valamint a katonai oktatási intézményi tanulmányokra való egészségi, pszichikai és fizikai alkalmasság elbírálásáról, továbbá az egészségügyi szabadság, a szolgálatmentesség és a csökkentett napi szolgálati idő engedélyezésének szabályairól." [Directive of the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Hungary on Medical, Psychological and Physical Screening Requirements for Military Service.] No. 7-2006. (III.21.)]. [http://www.honvedelem.hu/files/9/8110/7\\_2006\\_alkalmassagi\\_vizsg\\_hm\\_r.pdf](http://www.honvedelem.hu/files/9/8110/7_2006_alkalmassagi_vizsg_hm_r.pdf) (accessed July 28, 2011).

<sup>71</sup> Without medical background it is hard to objectively argue about the adequacy of the medical examination. As a comparison of the standards: a person who passed the required medical examinations and graduated from the US Army Airborne School and Ranger School does not necessarily meet the required medical standards for an airborne position in the HDF.

should involve all the necessary SOF units. This kind of training has to ensure that the individual skills of SOF units are complement and enhance each other, and their employment is coordinated. While the “quality over quantity” truth may suggests that rigorous training further decreases the number of SOF operators, the monograph focuses on the quality of training that would ensure comprehensive preparedness of HUNSOF units, instead of individuals. For this, it observes the training method of the HUNSOF units and if their training is coordinated enough to acknowledge quality.

The training system of the 34th BLSFB is quite comprehensive, and focused on the SF tasks, since the organization and the training methodology both mirrors the ARSOF SF units’ training system.<sup>72</sup> Parallel to this, there is an American mobile training team, which supports the training.<sup>73</sup> The training contains both national and international events and consists of five distinct blocks.<sup>74</sup> The first is the already introduced selection, which is the first training event at the same time. The second block is the basic special operations training, which is a narrowed tactical training, focusing on SF related tactics and procedures. The third block introduces team-oriented training including small unit tactics training and has a special focus on techniques of combat in urban environment. The next block of training is the various infiltration and exfiltration methods, such as airlift or parachute jump, or using vehicles, boats or swimming. Parallel to this is the individuals’ team-assignment specific training (medics, engineers, etc). Some of the candidates receive this training in Hungary and some of them graduate from the respective courses of the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. The fourth block consists of survival and geographical orientation training. Those members of the battalion who finished the fourth block of training are considered combat ready and may deploy for special forces missions. The focus in the fifth training phase is on maintaining the already-obtained skills, and teaching additional

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<sup>72</sup> More detailed discussion of the battalion’s training is available in MAJ Szabolcs Pecsvary “Special Operations Forces of Hungary: Is a Transformation Necessary?” (master’s thesis, Command and General Staff College, 2010).

<sup>73</sup> The first mobile training team started supporting training in 2006. Szűcs László, “NATO különleges műveleti alaptanfolyam Magyarországon először” [Special Operations Basic Course for the First Time in Hungary]. *Honvedelem.hu* [http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18195/kulonleges\\_muveleti\\_alaptanfolyam\\_megnyito.html](http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18195/kulonleges_muveleti_alaptanfolyam_megnyito.html) (accessed August 02, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> MAJ Gábor Sánta *Introduction briefing of the 34th BLSFB*. (PowerPoint presentation. Szolnok 2010).

skills during advanced courses or intra team cross-training events. Comparing this system to the ARSOF SF training, one may conclude, that the ARSOF SF role model was adapted successfully.

In case of the 25/88th battalion, the situation is different, since the battalion is engaged in several differing activities and deploys almost continuously. The unit trains for its core tasks in accordance with the *Training Program for the Rapid Reaction Soldiers and Subunits*.<sup>75</sup> The battalion primarily follows a one-year training cycle. Within this, the first event in the year is the winter survival training linked to the individual land navigation training. The second major training event is the first of two major annual live-fire exercises, followed by the annual mountaineer training and the various tactical courses of the HDF. During the summer, the unit usually conducts waterborne operations training. This consists of practicing river crossings with various engineer assets or employing rope bridges, waterborne infiltration techniques, and insertion from air to water by helicopters. During the autumn the battalion conducts the “Rohamlövész” and other courses, the urban combat tactics training, and the platoon (and higher) level live-fire exercises, usually embedded into a company-level tactical exercise. Depending on the number of the new recruits who arrive from the Basic Training Center, the battalion usually conducts two, eight-week-long Special Basic Training during which the new candidates learn the necessary basic knowledge about the battalion’s specific techniques, tactics and procedures.

The structure and curriculum of this training cycle ensures that the battalion is able to support SO as a special light infantry unit. Problems, however, have risen with the introduction of the additional tasks, such as the *limited military police* and *force protection*, which obviously requires both additional resources and training time. Similarly, the usually three-month long pre-deployment training and the deployments themselves require resources and time. Since the battalion officially does not hand over its additional tasks for the duration of the pre-deployment training or the deployment, it is obvious that a battalion is not able to conduct four different types of training simultaneously while maintaining its required high level of proficiency in its core tasks. As the battalion currently does not deploy to conduct

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<sup>75</sup> The Commander of the Joint Forces Command ordered an update of the 1997 edition of the training program in 2009. Hungarian Defense Forces, *Kiképzési Program a Gyorsreagálósú Katonák és Alegységek Részére* [Training Program for the Rapid Reaction Soldiers and Subunits], (Budapest: Department of Land Forces, 1997).

or participate in special operations, the special operations-related training has become secondary due to limited resources; deployment-related training has priority.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the increase in the quantity of required training, in this case, necessarily decreases the quality.

Summarizing the findings so far, one may conclude, that the 34th battalion is able to train focusing on its SO tasks. Concurrently, the 25/88th battalion should be able to train for its core tasks, however, the additional tasks and the high deployment rate reduces the effectiveness of special operations-related training. These findings foreshadow the most important issue of HUNSOF training; HUNSOF units' training activities are not truly coordinated above the level of respective battalions. The 345/2008 Directive of the Commander of the Joint Forces Command of the HDF regulates the short and mid-term development of the SO capability of the HDF.<sup>77</sup> It is a detailed and comprehensive document, and tasks every subunit involved in the SO development process. It states for example, that the 25/88th battalion has to designate a combat support element (minimum company strength) which will conduct training events with the 34th battalion in 2010 and 2011, and achieve readiness by the end of 2011.<sup>78</sup>

Two issues may emerge immediately based on this statement alone. First, the term “combat support element” is quite vague, and one may ask, why is it necessary to dedicate a segment of a battalion to SO whereas the whole battalion should be able to support SO (and in a way already dedicated to do so). Nevertheless, it may be an option to develop a kind of SO capability. The second issue is more significant, however. Observing the deployments of the 25/88th battalion, it is visible, that this task is unachievable. Based on the deployment statistics, the 25/88th battalion has not been at home as a complete unit since 2001, as it constantly deployed at least one of its companies.<sup>79</sup> During 2009 and 2010, the 25/88th battalion deployed two contingents in Afghanistan (Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team-

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<sup>76</sup> The Chief of the Defense Staff clearly articulated this priority in an interview. Draveczi-Ury Ádám, “Nehéz, de eredményes tizenkét hónap” [Difficult but Successful Twelve Months] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/26444/nehez,-de-eredmenyes-tizenket-honap> (accessed August 21, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> Joint Forces Command of the HDF, *A Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság partancsnokának 345/2008 MH ÖHP PK intézkedése a különleges műveleti képesség rövid- és középtávú fejlesztésére* [Directive of the Commander of the Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces for the Short- and Mid-term Development of the Special Operations Capability., NO. 345/2008.] Retrieved from the archives of the 25/88th LMB.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>79</sup> Pecsvarady, “Special Operations Forces of Hungary”, 14, figure 1.



OMLT) and provided two rotations in Kosovo. In 2011, the unit deployed in another OMLT, providing the bulk of the International Military Police team and (together with members of the 34th battalion) a close protection team at Kabul International Airport.<sup>80</sup> In addition, in the second half of that year, it provided the next rotation of the Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, and another contingent in Kosovo.<sup>81</sup>

It is clear, that next to these deployments and the required extensive pre-deployment trainings, it is hardly possible, to retain a company with permanent members for two years purely to participate in certain SO training events. Parallel to this, the 34th battalion is under the command of the JFC, while the 88th battalion is under the command of the 25th Infantry Brigade, which does not make cooperation easier due to the additional level of command (and source of tasks) the infantry brigade represents. Thus, the effectiveness of the common training of HUNSOF units is questionable, which means that regardless of the quantity of the battalion level SO training, the quality of the HUNSOF is not necessarily ensured on the higher echelons.

### **Men are More Important than Equipment - Career.**

For an organization, the most economical way to use the already available workforce is to ensure, that the competent individuals may stay within the organization for the longest possible time. By this, the organization retains the costly-trained capabilities while ensuring, that experienced leaders can reach the top of the hierarchy and have a full understanding about the organization itself, since they advanced through the various positions of the organizational pyramid. At the same time, the individual may pursue a predictable career in the organization from the lowest levels to the top. Two key features of the organization greatly influence the applicability of this procedure: first, the size and complexity of the

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<sup>80</sup> Kalamár Dezső, “Katonai rendőrök a nemzetközi repülőtéren” [Military Police in the International Airport] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/24759/katonai-rendorok-a-nemzetkozi-repuloteren> (accessed August 18, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Szűcs László, “Hat hónap után újra itthon” [At home again after six months] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/26720/hat-honap-utan-ujra-itthon> (accessed September 07, 2011). “Váltógazdaság” [To Alternate] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/26691/valtogazdasag> (accessed September 07, 2011).

organization, and second, the possibility to transfer from one part of the organization to the other. Observing these two aspects, ARSOF has developed a quite effective career system, although it took time to enable the current possibilities. The decline of the post-Vietnam era SOF and the distrust between conventional military and SOF made advancement difficult in ARSOF. During the 1970s, special forces qualified officers had to rotate between SOF and conventional units, in order to keep their career moving.<sup>82</sup> Even as late as the 1990s, there was the notion within the conventional US Army, that joining SOF has an adverse effect upon one's career.<sup>83</sup> Despite the commitment and efforts of the highest-level political decision-makers, the implementation of the Nunn-Cohen amendment targeting the reformation of SOF was not an easy and swift process.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, in the activation ceremony of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in 1987, Admiral William J. Crowe, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised General Lindsay, the first commander of USSOCOM to integrate SOF into the mainstream military and to break down the wall between the Army and SOF.<sup>85</sup> The effort was successful; the distrust disappeared, while ARSOF became a complete organization. Soldiers may now pursue a whole career within the ARSOF community, if they wish. SF operators may change positions and advance within the four battalions in a given SF group, which gives them possibility to step laterally if necessary. Although the SF groups are regionally oriented, staff work is similar in each of them, which provides additional possibility for SOF staff officers and NCOs to advance, or they may go up to the Special Forces Command. Rangers may move between the three Ranger battalions, and officers may go up to the regimental headquarters. They may leave the regiment as well, and serve in one of the several conventional airborne, air assault, or light infantry units, which require similar competencies. Several staff positions are available in one of the theater special operations commands (TSOC) or within the staff of USSOCOM. Indeed, even within ARSOF, hypothetically, one may advance to a position of a three star

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<sup>82</sup> Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 41.

<sup>83</sup> Tucker and Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces*, 45.

<sup>84</sup> Three key elements of the Nunn-Cohen amendment is the establishment of a distinct SOF command, the description and definition of special operations and the clarification of the SOF related budget issues. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 146.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

general. The advantage of ARSOF is that the sheer size and complexity provides enough positions to keep a trained operator within the organization for a long time. While HUNSOF similarly realized the value of retaining trained operators to the maximum possible extent, one may conclude, that its' possibilities to do this are quite limited.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, there are "traditional" issues within the HDF, which affect the possible career of HUNSOF soldiers.

There have been significant changes in the structure and organization of the HDF over the past twenty years. During these changes, the army lost huge amounts of its manpower. István Görög in his PhD dissertation analyzes the recent trends in the human resources of the HDF. As the dissertation states, the changes caused tensions for the soldiers especially from 2003. The modernization program stagnated, the social and political support of the army was low, the constant changes caused unpredictability, and the soldiers lost many of their former rights and privileges, which obviously decreased their motivation.<sup>87</sup> In 2008, the land forces of the HDF had only 79 percent of its required number of officers, while the NCO cadre was only 76 percent, and the enlisted soldiers were on 75 percent. Parallel to this, the workload increased by 15-25 percent due to the increased international commitments of the country.<sup>88</sup> The dissertation concluded that the current selection process is ineffective; still, most of the organizations are happy if they get additional recruits.<sup>89</sup> The author's prognosis is that the qualitative and quantitative increase of the recruits is not possible in the future. The primary goal thus should to retain the currently serving soldiers to the maximum extent.<sup>90</sup>

In 2010, due to changes in the retirement system in Hungary, the possibility to retire after twenty-five years of service for soldiers has ceased to exist. This drastic method should be able to increase the number of active officers and NCO's. Additionally, the Chief of the Defense Staff stated in an interview, the most important task of the General Staff of the HDF is to develop a comprehensive human resource strategy that includes the readjustment of the training, advancement, compensation and retirement system

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<sup>86</sup> Porkolab, „A különleges műveleti erők helye, szerepe és feladatai”, 111.

<sup>87</sup> István Görög, „A szárazföldi csapatok humánerőforrás biztosítása”, 47.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 105.

of the HDF.<sup>91</sup> This new system focuses on the Hungarian Defense Forces as a whole. Since it will start in the near future, currently it is not possible to analyze its potential to establish a valid career path for HUNSOF soldiers. The new model addresses the situation when a soldier leaves the army and probably it will establish a new method for the transfer between units within the army. In case of HUNSOF however, the HDF's priority should be to keep the expensively trained SOF operators in the army, preferably within HUNSOF close to the field in which they already gained valuable experience.

Currently there are several factors in case of HUNSOF, which affects a possible career path. First, the physical effects of the demanding life of SOF operator will be present in the later part of the individual's career, and the effectiveness of a fifty-year-old SOF operator in the field is questionable. Concurrently, they have to go through the already-mentioned rigorous medical screening every year in order to stay in their respective duty position. This means, that if there are no positions for a physically less capable but experienced SOF operator, then the only option for him is to leave the HDF.

HUNSOF is a notional group of units, without distinct permanent commands. There is only one SF battalion, one SO support infantry battalion, and one permanent SO training course with small cadre of trainers. Obviously, this seriously limits the number of available positions for a SOF soldier, since there is literally only one career ladder in the battalions, and above them, SOF career cease to exist. At the same time, the cross training is not institutionalized even between the 34th and the 25/88th. This would facilitate easier mobility between these units, and better insure that the already trained SF operators of the 34th battalion transfer to the 25/88th battalion (and vice versa), and have a chance to stay at least within HUNSOF.

The number of permanent SO commands within the HDF, which would employ the most able SO officers from the rank of captain and above are small. On the level of the General Staff, there is only a temporary SO command element, where the 34th battalion would delegate one or two SO officers as advisors on a case-by-case basis. On the level of the Joint Force Command, there is a small permanent SO

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<sup>91</sup> Draveczki-Ury Ádám, "Nehéz, de eredményes tizenkét hónap" [Difficult but Successful Twelve Months] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/26444/nehez,-de-eredmenyes-tizenket-honap> (accessed August 21, 2011).

command group.<sup>92</sup> Below these levels, there are only the battalions' staffs or ad hoc command groups, which do not require permanent staffing. One may see that the current size and structure of HUNSOF does not truly ensure that SOF operators pursue a whole career within HUNSOF. There are factors, which may force individuals to leave their positions regardless of their personal competence (medical requirements or the currently unknown factors of the new career models for example). But the possibility to move sideways is small, since there are a small number of positions only. Moves to the conventional army are also difficult, mostly because of the already mentioned limited mobility, and that the conventional units have certain reluctance to accept individuals with mostly SOF experience. Advancing forward within the SOF community may be similarly difficult, especially above the battalion level, due to the lack of higher-level SOF commands and staff positions. Thus, the ability of the HDF to acknowledge this SOF truth currently is limited.

### **Competent SOF Cannot be Created after Emergencies Occur - Organization.**

This SOF truth summarizes a problem, which may come from the lack of a standing, comprehensive SOF. As this SOF truth suggests, one cannot create a comprehensive and effective SOF when the crisis already exists, since in a crisis, time is usually a limiting factor. The structure of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) rightfully suggests, that adequate forces are readily available under single command should a crisis occur. Not only the Army, but also the Navy, Air Force and the Marines have their respective special operations forces currently under the command of USSOCOM.

There are several historical examples of the effects of disregarding this SOF truth. The Holloway Commission, the Special Operations Review Group that was responsible for the analysis of the failed hostage rescue attempt in Iran in 1980, found several factors, which seriously endangered the operation. Such as the ad hoc nature of the task force, the unclear command relationship, the lack of dedicated joint

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<sup>92</sup> However, this group is not superior to the 88th battalion or any special operations capable or air force assets for example. *Tenets of Employment of the Special Operations Battalion*, 17.

forces and their inadequate equipment. The smaller elements of the task force may have been proficient on their specific field of expertise, but the task force never conducted training (as preparation of the operation) together prior to the execution.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the need of a standing and proficient comprehensive SOF became obvious for the decision makers of the United States, and this led to the establishment of USSOCOM in accordance with the Nunn-Cohen amendment.

It may be visible from the short introduction of HUNSOF, that the current, dispersed SO capabilities of the HDF directly disregard this SOF truth. The very first level of command, on which the SOC units are under single authority, is the highest one, the JFC. This results in the already introduced uncoordinated activities of HUNSOF units. This is only one part of the problem however because the *Joint Doctrine* reveals another possible issue. It states that SO may occur in crisis response operations.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, during crisis response operations, recall of currently deployed HDF units abroad may happen in accordance with the agreed preliminary notification time, which may be as long as six months.<sup>95</sup> This means, that the airborne, air assault capability and the SO support infantry unit of the HDF is not available in the second half of 2011 for example, since the 25/88th LMB deploys in Afghanistan and in the Balkans.<sup>96</sup> It is logical from these observations, that quite regularly the HDF is simply not able to use its SOF, because they are not available at home.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the obvious lessons of Operation Eagle Claw, two counterarguments may emerge against the need of a more comprehensive, standing HUNSOF. First, the success of currently employed modular forces poses a good counterargument, and after all, a special operations tasks group is a modular force in a way.<sup>98</sup> The Hungarian contingent of the NATO Response Force is a modular unit.<sup>99</sup> The current

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<sup>93</sup> Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 72.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>95</sup> *Hungarian Defense Forces Joint Doctrine*, 56.

<sup>96</sup> “Váltógazdaság” [To Alternate] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/26691/valtogazdasag> (accessed August 21, 2011).

<sup>97</sup> The deployment history of the 88th LMB is introduced in Pecsvarady, “Special Operations Forces of Hungary”, 14. Figure 1.

<sup>98</sup> Modularity means, that military units (brigade and above) consist of various subunits and are only temporary organization for the period of the operation. This way, commanders can tailor the available forces to suit for the specific requirements of a theater or operation. Details about the modularity concept in the United States Army are

contingent (PRT-11) of the Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team is not homogenous either: twenty-five different units of the HDF delegated soldiers into the contingent (and the majority of the contingent comes from the 25/88th battalion).<sup>100</sup> Therefore, modularity so far proved to be useful. However, there are two important facts that one can cite defeating this counterargument. First, there is often a strict time constraint on SOF; a crisis usually requires immediate reaction. For example, SOF units deployed into Afghanistan within five weeks after the events of September 11, 2001.<sup>101</sup> Five weeks is definitely not sufficient time to marshal, train, equip and deploy a force for conducting unconventional warfare. Thus, the likely lack of time for pre-deployment training is an important factor to consider. Second, these modular forces of the HDF are not conducting special operations, and as the cited articles proves, they go through an extended period of common training.

The second counterargument in case of HUNSOF may come from the already mentioned ambiguous interpretation of SOF in HDF. One may acknowledge that the 34th BLSFB is the dedicated SOF unit of the HDF, as various documents state. However, in this case, one must seriously limit the range and scope of possible special operations, observing the current structure and capabilities of the 34th battalion. Since the battalion has only eight SF teams per company, in light of this SOF truth, in case of a sudden crisis, it may conduct only team-level direct actions. Should a situation require air transportation, or the support of an airborne or air assault capable infantry company, the JFC has to form an ad hoc group of units for that mission, directly violating this SOF truth.<sup>102</sup>

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available in U.S. Department of the Army, FM 3-0 *Operations* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, February 2008), Appendix C.

<sup>99</sup> Szűcs László, "Vizsga és puskaporszag a „hósvatagban”" [Evaluation and Gunsmoke in the Desert of Snow] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/18842/vizsga-es-puskaporszag-a-#8222;hosivatagban#8221> (accessed May 06, 2011).

<sup>100</sup> Csajbók József, "Ember, gép és állat együtt készül" [Training Humans, Machines and Animals Together] *Honvedelem.hu* <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/26193/ember,-gép-es-allat-együtt-keszul> (accessed June 03, 2011).

<sup>101</sup> Donald P. Wright, *A different Kind of War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Combined Arms Center Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 67.

<sup>102</sup> As the monograph already showed, the option of creating only a company level combat support element is currently not feasible.

One may conclude, that the current structure of HUNSOF, together with the currently uncoordinated employment of HUNSOF elements for non-SO missions show that the HDF cannot and does not acknowledge this SOF truth.

## **Part 4. Conclusion and Recommendations.**

This part of the monograph will summarize the findings, and translate them into better-expressed considerations. According to the thesis, the HDF may endanger the capabilities of HUNSOF by misusing it in combat and mismanaging HUNSOF in peacetime, either because of necessity or by the mistakes of the planners or decision-makers. The monograph collected evidence by answering two research questions.

The first research question is “how well does the doctrinal background support the effective use of HUNSOF in possible combat operations?” In other words, how well do they describe the proper employment of the SOF units, and how well do they prevent the misuse of these units? The analysis of the examined documents shows, that the current special operations related documents do not facilitate the effective use of HUNSOF, because at the levels above battalion, they are incomplete, and do not promote a clear understanding about the composition and capabilities of HUNSOF.<sup>103</sup>

On the tactical level, the 34th BLSFB has a new, relatively comprehensive set of manuals. On the contrary, the 25/88th LMB’s manuals do not address that unit’s possible employment in special operations, despite the fact that they discuss the tactical level employment of the battalion quite coherently. Thus, the proper employment of the individual HUNSOF units is possible, if it happens in accordance with their respective doctrines, since they are quite detailed. The JFC level manuals and documents show a different picture. The *Hungarian Defense Forces Joint Doctrine* does not discuss special operations, surprisingly, despite the fact that it is the command organization responsible for all the SOC units of the HDF. The ambiguity regarding SF and SOF appears in the document *Employment*

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<sup>103</sup> Indeed, others already identified the issue of inadequate doctrinal background also in the case of the 34th BLSFB. LTC Porkoláb concludes his analysis of the possible employment of Hungarian special operations forces that the current doctrines and their use are inadequate. Porkoláb, “A különleges műveleti erők helye, szerepe és feladatai”, 118.



*Considerations of Special Operations Forces*, which decreases the effective use of this otherwise comprehensive and well-composed paper. The overall conclusion of the observation of these two documents is that they describe the special operations mostly from the point of view of the 34th BLSFB, but do provide guidance about the planning and execution of operational-level joint special operations. The incompleteness of the examined documents carries significant risks, although the level of this risk of the misuse of HUNSOF is variable. During the employment of HUNSOF in a coalitional environment, for example, the more exact coalitional doctrines are authoritative, which ensure a more proper employment and set definite standards.<sup>104</sup> Parallel to this, the currently limited ambition level of the HDF allows and emphasizes the deployment of small SOF elements, which operate on the lower tactical level, thus further decreasing mistakes coming from doctrinal errors.<sup>105</sup>

The true risk emerges however, when one wants to gain a clear picture of a comprehensive employment of HUNSOF, when one has to employ SF, support infantry, aviation and other supporting units. One may conclude that there is a set of special operations related documents, still, not a single document that deals with this kind of employment in detail; thus, all documents would be relevant, but none of them would be premier. In reality, the experience of the planners and commanders may mitigate of the inadequacy of the doctrines. However, the operational-level experience of the HDF is rather limited, especially in the case of HUNSOF, since it is only individual SF teams that deploy. Thus, the currently limited special operations related experience of respective planners at the joint level is unlikely to be able to compensate for the incomplete doctrinal background. Summarily, the current doctrinal background supports the lowest tactical level use of HUNSOF. For this, even employing the units in accordance with their capabilities, the doctrines do not prevent their misuse on the higher, operational

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<sup>104</sup> Such documents are for example the AJP-01 *Allied Joint Doctrine*, or the MC 437 *Military Committee Special Operation Policy*.

<sup>105</sup> The *Hungarian Defense Forces Joint Doctrine* states, that the “ambition level” of the HDF regarding troop commitment abroad is the deployment of one brigade for six months, or one battalion for longer than six months period for non-combat operations, or one battalion for longer than six months for combat operations and one battalion task force for non-combat operations. *Hungarian Defense Forces Joint Doctrine*, 33.

level.<sup>106</sup> For example, by the doctrine of the 25/88th LMB, as a rapid reaction force, it can be the first unit to counter any aggression. In this role, however, the 25/88th LMB as light infantry is inferior to a mechanized infantry battalion without excessive support from other HDF units; the trade-off of rapid deployment is the lack of organic fire support, armor, and ground transportation assets. Since the supporting (artillery, aviation) units of the HDF do not belong to the rapid response category, the 25/88th LMB will likely suffer serious losses.

This situation represents a form of misuse, since the mission does not require the unique capabilities of the battalion like the airborne, air assault, or the capability to operate in small independent subunits, and the task would fit a stronger mechanized infantry unit better. There is another possibility of the misuse of the 25/88th LMB, when its fundamental capabilities are not necessarily required. If the battalion has to conduct its military police and force protection missions, the commitment of two of its companies with staff elements will disrupt the unit as a coherent force for a long time, since there are no other units in the HDF to take over these tasks. The 25/88th LMB is able to conduct these types of missions according to its doctrine. Still, in these cases, the planners miss the necessary operational outlook and they likely sacrifice one segment of the special operations capability of the HDF for relatively simple tasks that have somewhat less operational or strategic importance. One can trace the reason for these examples to the observation that the special operations-related doctrines do not emphasize the need for a standing HUNSOF, which include units other than just the 34th battalion. This means that there is a necessary choice to make. The battalion (or in fact, any other SOC unit) can support and conduct special operations as part of HUNSOF, or it can conduct its additional tasks or act as a regular light infantry unit. However, it cannot do both at the same time, and it is unlikely, that there is a turn back once the units are committed.

Thus, based on the above-mentioned observations, the planners have to keep in mind the following considerations and recommendations. First, it is likely, that the higher level commands

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<sup>106</sup> There are two forms of misusing SOF. First is, when there is a need for SOF, but for some reason they are not used, and the second is when they are used, but their capabilities are not needed. Porkoláb, "A különleges műveleti erők helye, szerepe és feladatai", 84.

emphasize the use of the 34th battalion, as “the official SOF” unit. Planners must not forget that this battalion represents only one segment of the special operations, and not the whole range of the required capabilities. Thus, they have to shape the intended mission to match the profile of the 34th BLSFB, or recommend the employment of all the necessary supporting SOC/SOF units. For this, they have to use the whole range of doctrines collectively, not just that of the 34th battalion. Second, there is no standing comprehensive special operations capability.<sup>107</sup> Third, should the HDF establish a temporary organization for conducting SO, planners have to be aware, that this force has to go through a necessary familiarization training and extensive preparation in order to be ready for the mission. Finally, it has to be clear to the planners and decision-makers that even the higher-level planning staff has to be handpicked, and must include officers from the respective HUNSOF units to ensure the necessary tactical outlook from the operational level planning.

The second research question is “how well does the HDF acknowledge certain management requirements of HUNSOF?” The answer should highlight the extent of the Hungarian Defense Forces’ ability or willingness to acknowledge certain requirements that ensure the specialness of special operations forces. For this, the monograph focused the analysis on four distinct areas, using the SOF truths as a guideline. Regarding the selection of special operations soldiers, the findings are mixed. Selection exists; however, it is not consistent throughout the HUNSOF community. Parallel to this, the various social factors greatly influence the pool of available candidates. These factors do not ensure that all of the HUNSOF operators have the desired qualities, and the respective units have to commit additional resources to raise the proficiency level of the soldiers. The importance of selection already appears among the recommendations of LTC Forray. In a way, he emphasizes the need of selection, when he states that on the contrary to the current practice, only former 34th battalion members should be in higher level, JFC or Defense Staff-level, special operations related positions in the HDF.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> The monograph means comprehensive as the existence of dedicated command and control elements, sustainment elements, transportation assets (including aviation) and the full compatibility of equipment, tactics and procedures.

<sup>108</sup> LTC László Forray ”A Különleges Műveleti Zászlóalj kiképzésének, felkészítésének és felszerelésének fejlesztési lehetőségei” [The Development Possibilities for Training, Preparation and Equipping the Special

The effectiveness of training is again questionable. On the lowest small unit level, both the 34th battalion and the 25/88th battalion have seemingly effective training. Above the battalion level, however, the training is uncoordinated, mostly due to the various additional tasks and the high deployment rate of the respective units. The short term effects of this ineffective training is obvious. While the HDF has trained and prepared SF teams readily available, there is no prepared and comprehensive SOF available on demand. Additionally, there is a harmful long-term effect also, which is the inability of the HDF to test and modify existing doctrines. The currently deployed SF teams of the 34th battalion in special operations in Afghanistan can gain only low, tactical level experience. Thus, the only alternative to gain operational level experience and develop a comprehensive SO doctrine would be the extensive common training of HUNSOF units. The problem with effective SO training stopping above battalion level is a difficult one to correct, because surprisingly, in a way, it is institutional.

The *Joint Doctrine* describes three levels of readiness based on training. Basic level readiness focuses on training up to squad and platoon level. Full readiness means that complete units are trained on the joint level in their tasks. Combat readiness means that a unit or organization is immediately deployable.<sup>109</sup> Immediately after this, the doctrine lists the priorities of training. The first priority is the training for basic level readiness. The followings are the training for ongoing deployments, international commitments, and finally training for the new capabilities.<sup>110</sup> Thus, the logically desirable training of HUNSOF for combat readiness or at least for full readiness is not in the list. Even if one considers the special operations capability as part of the new capabilities, training for this is very last in the list of priorities. The inadequacy of training is an already realized issue in the HDF. Indeed, reformation of the

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Operations Battalion] (PhD diss. abstract, Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2009), 8. In Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem Egyetemi Központi Könyvtár Doktori adatbázis, [http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/forray\\_laszlo\\_thu.pdf](http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2010/forray_laszlo_thu.pdf) (accessed August 21, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> *Hungarian Defense Forces Joint Doctrine*, 171.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 171

training system is an ongoing process. In order to be effective, the possible corrective actions definitely have to include the necessary change of this doctrinal fault.<sup>111</sup>

Regarding the career path of the SOF soldiers, one may see that the current size and structure of HUNSOF does not ensure that SOF operators can pursue a whole career within HUNSOF. The current circumstances simultaneously generate the “go up or go out” and the “stay in place for a long time” phenomena within the HUNSOF community, where the “go up” is a truly narrow path in the SOF operators’ career. Too rigid rules may force out individuals from HUNSOF who are not able to advance. This results in HUNSOF losing some of its most capable members.<sup>112</sup> The risk of the “stay in place for a long time” phenomenon is that there will be individuals in positions for too long, who lose motivation due to the inability of advancement. These individuals may gain significant amounts of experience in their narrow field of expertise over the years, but concurrently, due to their overspecialization, their chance of successfully transferring to another unit decreases over time. At the same time, as deployment is voluntary in the HDF, they may temporarily leave their position. This may or may not provide useful experience to them; nevertheless, their SF teams or subunits will not be complete, thus easily becoming more inoperable.<sup>113</sup> At this time, there is only one obvious recommendation: increase the strength of HUNSOF. Unfortunately, observing the capabilities of the HDF, it is unlikely to happen. Nevertheless, there is the possibility that the ongoing transformation and the new career model of the HDF brings advantageous changes and provides solution for this problem after 2012.

Finally, the last SOF truth, which says that SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur, is not acknowledged at this time. Since the country has not had to employ SOF in a crisis so far, the need of a standing comprehensive HUNSOF is not obvious. For those, who consider the 34th BLSFB the only SOF

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<sup>111</sup> The analysis of the most pressing issues of the training is well articulated in the article of COL Sándor Tóth (Ret.) “A katonai kiképzési rendszer korszerűsítésének dilemmái, út a jobb és költséghatékonyabb kiképzés felé” [Problems of the Modernization of the Military Training System, the Road to a Better and More Economical Training]. *Defense Forces Review*, issue 64., (Budapest: Ministry of Defense, Defense Staff, July 2011), 32.

<sup>112</sup> Indeed, similar event already happened during the reorganizations in 2006-2007 in the HDF. Görög, “A szárazföldi csapatok humán erőforrás biztosítása és fejlesztése”, 56.

<sup>113</sup> The application forms of available individual deployment positions are available on the website of the HDF. <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/dok?source=2&type=206#!DocumentBrowse> (accessed July 11, 2011).

unit of the HDF, this is not a visible problem, since the battalion deploys teams and conducts its training according to its plans. Those who are aware that special operations is far more broad than the capabilities of the 34th BLSFB are able to cover probably realize that the currently dispersed nature of HUNSOF and their uncoordinated activities logically prohibit the possibility of raising a credible SOF should an emergency occur. The short-term solution to counter this issue is the already-mentioned decision to retain specific, ad hoc grouping of forces purely for SO. Due to the high rate of deployment of the units of HDF, it is difficult and results in the constant rotation of the retained units. The long term and definitely better solution would be a structural change, the establishment of a dedicated, more comprehensive SOF within the HDF.

Summarizing the management of HUNSOF, one may conclude that due to the identified problems, the current quality of HUNSOF is not on par with the significantly higher-level risk, which exists in a special operation. Without correcting the management issues, there is a risk of a further decrease or, at best, stagnation in the quality, while the inherent risks of special operations are enduring.

The conclusion of the monograph is that possible and current employment and management practices of the HDF endanger the capabilities of HUNSOF. The doctrines do not give adequate guidance for planners, who do not have extensive SO-related experience anyway. The variety of doctrines allows the use of some units as a substitute for conventional forces, directly opposing the warning of FM 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces*, which says that SOF is not a substitute for conventional forces.<sup>114</sup> It is necessary to develop consciously and retain a permanent HUNSOF for conducting special operations, and not using units as a jack-of-all-trade organization. The current management issues prevent the further development of the quality of HUNSOF. Increased risks of special operations require high quality of the executing SOF. The current issues represent a half-hearted effort of managing SOF, which in turn means that the HDF will waste precious resources to maintain a quality that is inadequate to mitigate the inherent high-level risks of a possible special operation. While the HDF should implement changes in several areas

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<sup>114</sup> FM 3-05, 1-13.

to correct these mistakes, none of them would be more costly than losing HUNSOB in combat or allocating resources for a long time that would never manifest as effective special operations capability.

## GLOSSARY

SO: Special Operations (JP 1-02) - Operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted during peacetime competition, conflict, and war, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, nonspecial operations forces. Political-military considerations frequently shape special operations, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques and over-sight at the national level. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.

SOC: Special Operations Capable. In this monograph, those units of the HDF that are designed, trained and equipped to conduct special operations and missions. The existence of SOC units, distinct doctrines and dedicated permanent or temporary special operations command and control element constitute the special operations capability of the HDF.

SOF: Special Operations Forces. (JP 1-02) - Those active and reserve component forces of the (US) military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations.

HDF: Hungarian Defense Forces (Magyar Honvédség). The armed forces of the Republic of Hungary.

HUNSOF: Hungarian Special Operation Forces. This definition officially does not exist. In the context of this paper HUNSOF consist of those SOC units of the HDF which are designed, trained and equipped to conduct special operations and missions.

JFC: Joint Forces Command (Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság). This command has the overall authority over the ground and air force units of the Hungarian Defense Forces, excluding those military institutions which are under the direct command of the Chief of Defense Staff.



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